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LESSON LEARNED

Exercise Evaluation: Training Independent Evaluators

SUMMARY

Exercise planners should identify and train personnel solely charged with evaluating functional disciplines when evaluation is the desired exercise outcome. These evaluators should be separate from control staff and trained accordingly. The designation of these officials will ensure a more consolidated and meaningful after-action report (AAR).

DESCRIPTION

On February 23, 2005, the Pierce County Washington Terrorism Early Warning/Response Taskforce staged Cascade Resolve 05, a multi-agency, full-scale exercise. The exercise simulated multiple events on the Puyallup County Fairgrounds, including a large conventional explosion resulting in a high number of casualties, structural damage with trapped victims, chemical and radiological hazards, and multiple hostage-taking situations. The exercise planning team designed the exercise to evaluate the capability to perform the critical tasks that are required to respond to a series of terrorist attacks.

The exercise control staff positioned at least one controller/evaluator at each event that took place in the field and at each of the primary supporting locations, and tasked the controller/evaluator with observing and recording exercise events including player actions. Exercise control staff empowered the controller/evaluators to prompt certain actions with prepared injects or other information. However, the control staff did not designate any independent exercise evaluators separate from the controllers/evaluators. As a result, evaluations came exclusively from personnel who had participated in the planning and execution of the exercise. The exercise control staff concluded that combining the controller and evaluator functions resulted in inadequate evaluation of the exercise.

Exercise control staff should identify exercise evaluators who should be separate from control staff and trained accordingly. The designation of these officials will ensure a more consolidated and meaningful AAR.

CITATION

Pierce County, Washington Department of Emergency Management. *Pierce County, Washington Exercise—Cascade Resolve 05: After Action Report and Improvement Plan*. Jun 2005.

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